CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

English Literature Admissions Test 4501/11

Wednesday 7 November 2012 Morning 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions to Candidates

Please read this page carefully, but do not open the question paper until told to do so.

A separate 8 page answer booklet is provided. Please check you have one.

Write your name, date of birth and centre number in the spaces provided on the answer booklet. Please write very clearly, preferably in black ink.

You should allow at least 30 minutes for reading this question paper, making notes and preparing your answer.

At the end of the examination, you must hand in both your answer booklet and this question paper. Any rough notes or plans that you make should only be written in your answer booklet.

No texts, dictionaries or sources of reference may be brought into the examination.

Developed and administered on behalf of the University of Oxford by Cambridge Assessment.

This paper consists of 8 printed pages and 4 blank pages.

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Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes.
You should spend at least 30 minutes reading and annotating the passages and in preparing your answer.

The following poems and extracts from longer texts offer different representations of relationships within families. They are arranged chronologically by date of composition or publication. Read all the material carefully, and then complete the task below.

Task:

Select two or three of the passages (a) to (f) and compare and contrast them in any ways that seem interesting to you, paying particular attention to distinctive features of structure, language and style. In your introduction, indicate *briefly* what you intend to explore or illustrate through close reading of your chosen passages.

This task is designed to assess your responsiveness to unfamiliar literary material and your skills in close reading. Marks are not awarded for references to other texts or authors you have studied.

(a) From *Gilead* (2004), a novel by Marilynne Robinson

I told you last night that I might be gone sometime, and you said, Where, and I said, To be with the Good Lord, and you said, Why, and I said, Because I'm old, and you said, I don't think you're old. And you put your hand in my hand and you said, You aren't very old, as if that settled it. I told you you might have a very different life from mine, and from the life you've had with me, and that would be a wonderful thing, there are many ways to live a good life. And you said, Mama already told me that. And then you said, Don't laugh! because you thought I was laughing at you. You reached up and put your fingers on my lips and gave me that look I never in my life saw on any other face besides your mother's. It's a kind of furious pride, very passionate and stern. I'm always a little surprised to find my eyebrows unsinged after I've suffered one of those looks. I will miss them.

It seems ridiculous to suppose the dead miss anything.

If you're a grown man when you read this - it is my intention for this letter that you will read it then - I'll have been gone a long time. I'll know most of what there is to know about being dead, but I'll probably keep it to myself. That seems to be the way of things.

I don't know how many times people have asked me what death is like, sometimes when they were only an hour or two from finding out for themselves. Even when I was a very young man, people as old as I am now would ask me, hold on to my hands and look into my eyes with their old milky eyes, as if they knew I knew and they were going to *make* me tell them. I used to say it was like going home. We have no home in this world, I used to say, and then I'd walk back up the road to this old place and make myself a pot of coffee and a fried-egg sandwich and listen to the radio, when I got one, in the dark as often as not. Do you remember this house? I think you must, a little. I grew up in parsonages. I've lived in this one most of my life, and I've visited in a good many others, because my father's friends and most of our relatives also lived in parsonages. And when I thought about it in those days, which wasn't too often, I thought this was the worst of them all, the draftiest and the dreariest. Well, that was my state of mind at the time. It's a perfectly good old house, but I was all alone in it then. And that made it seem strange to me. I didn't feel very much at home in the world, that was a fact. Now I do.

(b) From *After You'd Gone* (2000), a novel by Maggie O'Farrell

Jamie screams and batters the tray of his highchair with his plastic trainer cup. Annie joins in the wailing gleefully, letting her cornflakes get soggy and unappetising in the milk.

'Quiet!' Neil roars from behind the *Scotsman.*

The children ignore him. Kirsty crams a spoonful of baby rice into Jamie's mouth, hoping to thwart the noise. 'Eat up your breakfast, Annie, or you'll be late for playschool.'

'I hate playschool.'

'You do not. You liked it last week.'

'I hate it today.'

'You haven't been yet so how do you know you hate it?'

'I just do.' Annie swishes her spoon around her bowl, making the milk skirl around the rim.

'Don't play with it, just eat it,' Kirsty says. Jamie chooses that moment to spit out his rice which spatters Kirsty's shirt. 'Oh, bloody hell,' she exclaims, jumping up for a cloth.

'You swore! You swore!'

Neil appears from behind the paper. 'Eat that up at once, young lady,' he thunders at Annie.

'No, I won't, I don't like it!' she shouts.

Neil smacks her hand. 'Do as I say!'

Annie begins to scream in earnest. Over the racket, Kirsty hears the telephone ringing. 'I'll get it.' She picks up the receiver with one hand, wiping down her shirt with the other. 'Hello?'

'Kirsty, it's Dad.'

'Hi, how are you? Listen, can I call you back? It's feeding time at the zoo here and as you can probably hear, things are getting out of hand.'

'I'm afraid I've got some rather bad news.'

Kirsty turns her back on the kitchen and clutches the receiver with both hands. 'What is it? Is it Mum? What's happened?'

'Your mother's fine. She's here with me. It's Alice.'

'Alice?'

'She was hit by a car. She's in a coma.'

'What? But when?'

The kitchen has become deathly quiet. Annie is holding her spoon to her chest, staring open-mouthed at her mother. Neil comes across the room and stands behind Kirsty, listening. Jamie, sensing a change for the worse in the atmosphere, begins to snivel.

(c) 'The Pact' (1984), a poem by Sharon Olds

We played dolls in that house where Father staggered with the
Thanksgiving knife, where Mother wept at noon into her one ounce of
cottage cheese, praying for the strength not to
kill herself. We kneeled over the
rubber bodies, gave them baths
carefully, scrubbed their little
orange hands, wrapped them up tight,
said goodnight, never spoke of the
woman like a gaping wound
weeping on the stairs, the man like a stuck
buffalo, baffled, stunned, dragging
arrows in his side. As if we had made a
pact of silence and safety, we kneeled and
dressed those tiny torsos with their elegant
belly-buttons and minuscule holes
high on the buttock to pee through and all that
darkness in their open mouths, so that I
have not been able to forgive you for giving your
daughter away, letting her go at
eight as if you took Molly Ann or
Tiny Tears and held her head
under the water in the bathinette
until no bubbles rose, or threw her
dark rosy body on the fire that
burned in that house where you and I
barely survived, sister, where we
swore to be protectors.

(d) 'Heredity' (1917), a poem by Thomas Hardy

I am the family face;
Flesh perishes, I live on,
Projecting trait and trace
Through time to times anon
Leaping from place to place
Over oblivion.

The years-heired feature that can
In curve and voice and eye
Despise the human span
Of durance - that is I;
The eternal thing in man
That heeds no call to die.

(e) Sonnet 2 (1609), by William Shakespeare

When forty winters shall beseige thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held:
Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treaure of thy lusty days,
To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,'
Proving his beauty by succession thine!
This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

(f) From *King John* (1596), a play by William Shakespeare

KING PHILIP: Patience, good lady! comfort, gentle Constance!

CONSTANCE: No, I defy all counsel, all redress,
But that which ends all counsel, true redress,
Death, death; O amiable lovely death!
Thou odouriferous stench! sound rottenness!
Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,
Thou hate and terror to prosperity,
And I will kiss thy detestable bones
And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows
And ring these fingers with thy household worms
And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust
And be a carrion monster like thyself:
Come, grin on me, and I will think thou smilest
And buss thee as thy wife. Misery's love, [*buss: kiss*
O, come to me!

KING PHILIP: O fair affliction, peace!

CONSTANCE: No, no, I will not, having breath to cry:
O, that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth!
Then with a passion would I shake the world;
And rouse from sleep that fell anatomy
Which cannot hear a lady's feeble voice,
Which scorns a modern invocation.

CARDINAL PANDULPH; Lady, you utter madness, and not sorrow.

CONSTANCE: Thou art not holy to belie me so;
I am not mad: this hair I tear is mine;
My name is Constance; I was Geffrey's wife;
Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost:
I am not mad: I would to heaven I were!
For then, 'tis like I should forget myself:
O, if I could, what grief should I forget!
Preach some philosophy to make me mad,
And thou shalt be canonized, cardinal;
For being not mad but sensible of grief,
My reasonable part produces reason
How I may be deliver'd of these woes,
And teaches me to kill or hang myself:
If I were mad, I should forget my son,
Or madly think a babe of clouts were he: [*babe of clouts: a rag doll*
I am not mad; too well, too well I feel
The different plague of each calamity.

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